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HALF HOUR LESSONS

— ON —

AMERICAN AUTHORS,

— FOR —

Social \* Literary \* Circles,

PREPARED BY

MRS. J. H. LEWIS,

DECATUR, ILL.



# Half-Hour Lessons Upon American Authors,

## FOR SOCIAL LITERARY CIRCLES.

Prepared and Published by MRS. J. H. LEWIS.

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DECATUR, ILLINOIS, 1887.

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### INTRODUCTION AND EDITORIAL GREETINGS.

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A few years ago a lady's education was generally considered "finished" when she turned her back on the school room, laid her school books on a high shelf, and usually entered into the bonds of matrimony. This last act was the final quietus to literary effort.

Within a few years many organizations have sprung up for the higher development and education of women, even amid the pressing cares of home and social life. Among them the Social Literary Circle has found a home. A little seed dropped in a fertile soil a year and a half ago has budded and brought forth fruit.

Many circles have been formed, and the work has prospered through summer's scorching heat, through the lovely-tinted autumnal hours, and through hoary winter's fiercest blasts.

We have taken old-time peeps of New York City through Diedrich Knickerbocker's eyes; we have eaten of Geoffrey Crayon's "Salmagundi"; we have climbed the mountain side with Rip Van Winkle, and almost slept in "Sleepy Hollow" by the side of Washington Irving; we have wandered through the pathless forest with "Natty Bumps", the "Leather Stocking" hero of Cooper's fancy, then rigged him up in his tarpanlin and called him "Long Tom Coffin" as we sailed with him over the "Bounding Billows"; we lingered a long time among the cool, quiet, poetic fancies of Bryant, the Father of American poetry; we have made the acquaintance of Irving's lady friends, and many of the Society Queens of a century ago, and also of the literary ladies who first gave Europe to know that the young country's daughters were akin in intellect to their own fair dames.

We have been mystified, edified, and almost defied at times by Ralph Waldo Emerson's deep philosophizing, but ever encouraged by a wise mentor we did not consign him to oblivion, but rather sheltered him in a "Cleft in the Rock", from whence his memory shall be taken from time to time, ever growing more beautiful to us as we are able to grasp his "idealities" and his "spiritualities."

Weeks of ravishing delight have been ours as we have studied the works of America's Ace of Fiction, Nathaniel Hawthorne. James Russell Lowell says of him :

"There's Hawthorne with *genius* so shrinking and rare  
That you hardly, at first, see the strength that is there.  
A frame so robust, with a nature so sweet,  
So earnest, so graceful, so solid, so fleet ;  
When Nature was shaping him, clay was not granted,  
For making as full sized a man as was wanted ;  
So to fill out her model, a little she spared  
From a finer grained stuff, for a woman prepared,  
And she could not have hit a more excellent plan,  
For making him fully, and perfectly, *man*."

We have also had rich treats from the gifted minds of our quartette of poets—Longfellow, Whittier, Holmes and Lowell. To Longfellow we say : Sleep well, in Auburn's peaceful dale ! but your sweet thoughts of purity and love shall live undimmed for ages. To Whittier, in B. F. Taylor's language, we say :

"Strike not thy tent beside the sea,  
Brave Laureate of Liberty."

Sing on ! And we thank the kind Power that has brought back to us, from over the seas, our Holmes and Lowell, richer than ever in the lore and wit which has made them so dear to the American heart.

We endeavored to descend into the "Maelstrom" of Poe's sad life and to search the darkened chambers of his "Haunted Palace" for the truths that might be like light-house gleams, off the desolate coast.

We at last partook of the "Bitter Sweet" berries and wandered down "The Bay Path" of J. G. Holland, and with *Kathrina's* hero we sat on the mountain's top looking over into the next decade for the work for the New Year.

We hope that the same good fellowship and love will prevail as in the past. "In union there is strength." Remember that in study as in music, it is *harmony* that gives the *charm*. Differences of opinion will at times appear, but they are—or should be—only for the moment, as what are called "passing" notes, which are soon again resolved into the perfect harmony of the closing chord. And while interested in looking at the beautiful stones which have been polished and set, each in its place, in the temple of literature, let us not be content with an outside view of the structure, but may all desire to open the portals and find the gems within which shall sparkle and reflect the pure crystal beams of the "Central Sun" of life.

This year we shall not walk with bowed and reverent heads among the *tombs*, but shall cultivate the acquaintance of our *living* authors for the most part.

Death has set his seal on many of whom we wrote and studied last year, and the work of culling from the gathered shocks of so many years was com-

paratively easy. The only trouble was, time was *too short* to gather *all* the sheaves. It will not be possible for us to make mention of all who are to-day before the American people as "Men and Women of Letters", so we shall have to pass over many who might with truth be placed in the front rank, and confine ourselves to those whose names are placed before us in every magazine and paper we peruse. Many are being daily crowned with wreaths of "laurel and bay," and of others it may be said, they are yet in the hey-day of life, not quite ripe, perhaps, with the glory that may be accorded them after they shall have filled out their years. Sometimes we see the most gorgeous colorings on the western slopes, just ere the sun slips below "the everlasting hills."

Posthumous fame is the surest. Among those whose names *now* are immortal are the sweet sisters, Alice and Phebe Cary. Loving in their lives — not long divided in their deaths.

The subjects of our first two lessons have been mentioned before, but will now be placed before the student for special study, as occupying very high rank among the literary women of the world, not only at home, but known abroad as bright stars. The first in order of time we place MRS. HARRIETT BEECHER STOWE, the Queen of American Fiction, and second, MRS. JULIA WARD HOWE, a poetess, and also one of the leading woman suffragists of the nation, and one who is seeking, in many laudable ways, the elevation and education of womanhood.

Our poets, magazine writers and fiction writers shall in turn be discussed in their order of time, while the other literary characters—historians, journalists and travelers—will be left for private reading.

Encyclopedias and magazine articles form the basis for most of this year's work, as few lives have yet been published.

**MRS. HARRIET BEECHER STOWE.**

LITCHFIELD, CONNECTICUT.

*BORN 1812 OR 1816.*

- 1st TOPIC: Ancestral and personal sketch.  
2d " Give different varieties of styles of her writings.  
3d " Her master-piece, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, at pleasure, with account of its great circulation.  
4th " Select from her "Religious Poems", "Only a Year," or other at pleasure.  
5th " "Old Town Folks."  
5th " "Pink and White Tyranny", with comments on the subject.  
7th " The "Minister's Wooing."  
8th " "Repression", from "Little Foxes."  
9th " Volunteer selections.  
10th " General discussion.

**MRS. JULIA WARD HOWE.**

NEW YORK.

*BORN 1816.*

- 1st TOPIC: Topical sketch of author.  
2d " Selections from "Passion Flowers."  
" " "Words for the Hour."  
3d " Give account of her works of travel.  
4th " "The New Exodus."  
5th " Her present work and its influence.  
6th " Her poem, "Our Country."  
7th " Give poem in which we find the lines—  
"Men saw the thorns on Jesus' brow,  
But Angels saw the roses."  
8th " Give account of the inspiration of her immortal poem, "Battle Hymn of the Republic."  
9th " General discussion.

## MRS. ELIZABETH PRENTISS.

PORTLAND, MAINE.

BORN 1818.

- 1st TOPIC : "Stepping Heavenward."  
2d " " "Aunt Jane's Hero."  
3d " " "Pemaquid."  
4th " " Life Sketch.

## THE CARY SISTERS.

CINCINNATI, OHIO.

BORN—ALICE, 1820 or 1822. DIED, 1871.  
" PHEBE, 1821. " 1871.

- 1st TOPIC : Personal sketch of the sisters in their early home life in Ohio.  
2d " " Their removal to New York, with subsequent history.  
3d " " Poem: "My Charley."  
4th " " "My Faded Shawl."  
5th " " "The Grace Wife of Keith."  
6th " " "If and If."  
7th " " The Bridal Veil."  
8th " " Alice's favorite, "An order for a picture."  
9th " " Pictures of memory."  
10th " " Phebe's "Woman's Conclusion."  
11th " " "Light."  
12th " " "A Summer Storm."  
13th " " "Nearer Home."  
14th " " Volunteer selections and discussions.

## THOMAS BUCHANAN READ.

BORN, 1822. DIED, 1872.

- 1st TOPIC : Sketch of author.  
2d " " Epitomize "The Wild Waggoner of the Alleghanies", with fine selections.  
3d " " Selections from "The New Pastoral."  
4th " " "A Summer Story."  
5th " " "Sheridan's Ride"  
6th " " "Drifting."  
7th " " Comments.

## EDWARD EVERETT HALE.

BOSTON, MASS.

*BORN, 1822.*

- 1st TOPIC : Sketch of Author.  
2d    "    "The Man Without a country."  
3d    "    "If, Yes and Perhaps."  
4th   "    "Ups and Downs."  
5th   "    "Ten times one is Ten."

## MRS. A. D. T. WHITNEY.

BOSTON, MASS.

*BORN, 1824.*

- 1st TOPIC : Author's sketch.  
2d    "    Her prose work.  
          "Faith Gartney's Girlhood,"  
3d    "    "Hitherto!"  
4th   "    "Patience Strong's Outing."  
5th   "    "A Summer in Leslie Goldthwaite's Life."  
6th   "    "Sights and Insights."  
7th   "    Her poem: "Larvæ."  
8th   "    "Sunlight and Starlight."  
8th   "    "Christmas."  
10th  "    Discuss subjects and influences of her writings.

## CHARLES DUDLEY WARNER.

PLAINFIELD, MASS.

*BORN, 1829.*

- 1st TOPIC : Early life, with its teaching for him.  
2d    "    Earliest literary efforts.  
3d    "    Describe his varied styles of writing.  
4th   "    Select from his sketches "My Summer in a Garden."  
5th   "    "A New Vision of Sin."  
5th   "    Select from "Backlog Studies."  
7th   "    "The Yankee Philosopher."  
8th   "    Volunteer Selections.  
9th   "    Criticisms or discussion.  
10th  "    Give latest magazine work.  
11th  "    Select at pleasure from his books of travel:  
          "Winter on the Nile." "In the Levant." "In  
          the Wilderness."

## HELEN HUNT JACKSON.

AMHERST, MASS.

*BORN, 1830.*

*DIED, 1885.*

- 1st TOPIC : Author's sketch.  
2d    "    Give varieties of style of her work.  
3d    "    Her poem, "Spinning."  
4th   "    "My Legacy."  
5th   "    "Love's Largess."  
6th   "    "At Last."  
7th   "    Prose work: "The Awkward Age," from "Bits  
          of Talk."  
8th   "    A Genius for Affection."  
9th   "    Epitomize "A Century of Dishonor" and give its  
          teachings.  
10th  "    "Ramona," her great work of fiction.  
11th  "    Selections at pleasure.  
12th  "    General discussion.

## PAUL HAMILTON HAYNE.

CHARLESTON, S. C.

*BORN, 1831.*

*DIED, 1886.*

- 1st TOPIC : Personal sketch with poem, "A Portrait."  
2d    "    "The Presentiment."  
3d    "    "The Ten Summers."  
4th   "    "My Son, Will."  
5th   "    His last touching poem, "Face to Face," written  
          while himself in the "border land."

## EDMUND C. STEDMAN.

HARTFORD, CONN.

*BORN, 1833.*

- 1st TOPIC : Personal sketch.  
2d    "    "The Heart of New England." Poem.  
3d    "    "How Old Brown took Harper's Ferry."  
4th   "    "The Diamond Wedding."  
5th   "    "The Doorstep."  
6th   "    "The Undiscovered Country."  
7th   "    Discuss and select from "Poets of America" at  
          pleasure.  
8th   "    Criticisms.

**MARY VIRGINIA TERHUNE.**

(MARIAN HARLAND.)

DORCHESTER, MASS.

BORN, 1834.

- 1st TOPIC: Character sketch and early career.  
2d " Her first book, "Alone." }  
3d " "Nemesis." } Epitomize.  
4th " "The Hidden Path." }  
5th " Selections from "Loitering in Pleasant Paths."  
6th " Conversations on her worth as a standard book-  
writer.

**FRANK R. STOCKTON (Humorist).**

PHILADELPHIA, PENN.

BORN, 1834.

- 1st TOPIC: Sketch and particulars of his writing "Rudder  
Grange." (*Century Magazine*, July, '86).  
2d " "The Lady or the Tiger."  
3d " "The Late Mrs. Null."  
4th " "The Casting Away of Mrs. Lecks and Mrs.  
Aleshine."

**HARRIET PRESCOTT SPOFFORD.**

MAINE.

BORN, 1835.

- 1st TOPIC: Sketch.  
2d " "Sir Rohan's Ghost."  
3d " "Amber Gods and Other Stories."  
4th " "Azarian."  
5th " "New England Legends."  
6th " "The Thief in the Night."  
7th " "Selections from magazine articles."

## REVIEW QUESTIONS.

1. Who is the Queen of American Fiction?
2. What work placed her in this rank?
3. In what respect can she be called the Queen?
4. Who is Mrs. Julia Ward Howe?
5. Name her masterpiece of poetry.
6. Name lady writers born in the 2d decade of this century.
7. What was Alice Cary's favorite poem of her own writing?
8. Give your favorite quotation from her.
9. Name your selections from Phebe's.
10. What rank will you assign Helen Hunt Jackson as an authoress?
11. Name her two finest works.
12. What think you of Mrs. Prentiss' style?
13. Are her works of a religious or worldly character?
14. Give your opinion of Mrs. A. D. T. Whitney.
15. Who wrote "Drifting"?
16. Name his other famous poem.
17. Who wrote, and where do you find, the following quotation?

"I think we do not any of us find out how to live till  
we have pretty well used up, and spoiled, perhaps, *one*  
*life.*"
18. Also:

"God sets some souls in *shade alone*.  
They have no daylight of their own."
19. What do you think of that idea?
20. Who wrote this?

"I'll wear my white veil  
For a sign or a cover,  
As you shall be proven  
My lord or my *lover.*"
21. Who is the author of "Nearer Home"?
22. "With dreamful eyes, my spirit lies  
Under the walls of Paradise." Who and where?
23. "Who knows how a life at the last may show?" Author and place.
24. "God does not send strange flowers every year", with remainder of verse. From where?

25. What is Charles Dudley Warner's present position?
26. "Lettuce is like conversation—it must be fresh and crisp,  
so sparkling that you scarcely know the *bitter* that  
is in it." Who and where?
27. How do you like E. C. Stedman's Criticisms of our  
American Authors?
28. "My angel of perfect love  
Is the angel men call death."  
From what poem? By whom?
29. "To feel once more that fresh wild thrill  
I'd give—but who can live youth over?"
30. Who wrote "Nemesis and "Hidden Path"?
31. What is your opinion of such books as "The Late Mrs.  
Null" and its companion, "Mrs. Lecks and Mrs. Ale-  
shine"?
32. In view of one verse of Scripture, "A merry heart doeth  
good like a medicine," is it waste time to read books  
of humor?

**MRS. CELIA THAXTER.**

PORTSMOUTH, N. H.

*BORN, 1835.*

1st TOPIC : For what magazine were her best thoughts written ?

2d " Select from "Among the Isles of Shoals."

3d " "The Cruise of the Mystery."

4th " "In a Horse Car."

5th " "Dust," from "Poems for Children."

**SAMUEL C. CLEMENS.**

(MARK TWAIN. Humorist.)

FLORIDA, MISSOURI.

*BORN, 1835.*

1st TOPIC : Personal sketch.

2d " Select from "Roughing It."

3d " " " "Tramp Abroad."

4th " " " "Innocents Abroad."

5th " " " "The Gilded Age."

6th " " " "Life on the Mississippi."

**CHARLES FARRAR BROWNE.**

ARTEMUS WARD (Humorist.)

WATERFORD, MAINE.

*BORN, 1836.*

1st TOPIC : Historic Sketch.

2d " Select from "Artemus Ward, His Book."

3d " "Artemus Among the Mormons."

4th " "Artemus Ward in England."

5th " "The Prince of Wales." (His Book).

6th " "At the Tomb of Shakspeare."

7th " "Very Much Married." From his travels.

**THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH.**

PORTSMOUTH, N. H.

*BORN 1836.*

1st TOPIC : Sketch of Author.

2d " Poem: "The Blue Bells of New England."

3d " "Before" and "After the Rain."

4th " "Babie Belle."

5th " Select from "Cloth of Gold."

6th " "Marjorie Daw."

7th " "The Lady of Castlemore."

8th " "Judith."

**WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS.**

MARTINSVILLE, OHIO.

*BORN, 1837.*

- 1st TOPIC: Biographical Sketch.  
 2d " Early literary efforts.  
 3d " "The Movers." Poems by two friends.  
 4th " "Dead."  
 5th " Select from "Life in Venice."  
 6th " "A Day in Pompeii." From Italian Journey.  
 7th " Select from and epitomize "Their Wedding Journey."  
 8th " "A Chance Acquaintance."  
 9th " "Indian Summer."  
 10th " "A Foregone Conclusion."  
 11th " Discussion of merit of this author.  
 12th " Criticisms.

**EDWARD P. ROE.**

NEW YORK.

*BORN, 1838.*

- 1st TOPIC: "Barriers Burned Away."  
 2d " "Opening of a Chestnut Burr."  
 3d " "Nature's Serial Story."  
 4th " "The Knight of the Nineteenth Century."  
 5th " "A Young Girl's Wooing."  
 6th " Discussion of merit, and criticisms.

**FRANCIS BRET HARTE.**

ALBANY, N. Y.

*BORN 1839.*

- 1st TOPIC: Biographical Sketch.  
 2d " Describe his style.  
 3d " "Her Letter", from "Poverty Flat."  
 4th " "Plain Language from Truthful James."  
 5th " "John Burns of Gettysburgh."  
 6th " "Tales of the Argonauts."  
 7th " "Twins of Table Mountain."  
 8th " "Snowbound at Eagle's."  
 9th " At pleasure other selections.

**CINCINNATUS HEINE MILLER. (JOAQUIN).**

INDIANA.

*BORN, 1841.*

1st TOPIC: Character Sketch.

2d " Select at pleasure from "Songs of the Sierras."

3d " Select from "Sword of the South", or read it all.

4th " Epitomize "Shadows of Shasta."

5th " "First Families of the Sierras."

6th " Discussion of merit.

**LOUISE MAY ALCOTT.**

MASSACHUSETTS.

*BORN, 1842.*

1st TOPIC: Sketch of Author's Parentage.

2d " "Little Women." (Her own life).

3d " "Little Men."

4th " "Old-Fashioned Girl."

5th " "Work."

6th " "Jo's Boys."

**HENRY JAMES.**

NEW YORK.

*BORN, 1843.*

1st TOPIC: "A Portrait of a Lady."

2d " "Daisy Miller."

**ELIZABETH STUART PHELPS.**

BOSTON, MASS.

*BORN, 1844.*

1st TOPIC: Sketch of Author.

2d " Her Religious Books, with selections from them.

3d " "The Gates Ajar."

4th " "Hedged In."

5th " "Silent Partner."

6th " "Beyond the Gates."

7th " "Story of Avis."

8th " Discussion.

**WILL. CARLETON.**

HUDSON, MICH.

*BORN, 1845.*

- 1st TOPIC: Author's sketch.  
2d " "Over the hill to the Poor House." from Farm  
" " " " Ballads.  
3d " " "Gone with a Handsomer Man."  
4th " " "Betsey and I are Out."  
5th " " "Betsey and I Made Up."  
6th " " "Festival of Good Cheer," from Farm Festivals.  
7th " " "Want," from City Ballads.  
8th " " The "Christmas Baby," from Farm Legends.  
9th " " "The Three Lovers."  
10th " " "Rifts in the Cloud."  
11th " " "Burning of Chicago."  
12th " " Discussion.

**FRANCES HODGSON BURNETT.**

MANCHESTER, ENGLAND.

*BORN, 1849.*

- 1st TOPIC: "A Fair Barbarian."  
2d " " "That Lass o' Lowrie's."  
3d " " "Louisiana."  
4th " " "Through one Administration."

**MARION CRAWFORD.**

SON OF THOMAS CRAWFORD, SCULPTOR.

ROME.

- 1st TOPIC: "Roman Singers."  
2d " " "Zoroaster."  
3d " " "An American Politician."  
4th " " "Tales of a Lonely Parish."  
5th " " "Mr. Isaacs."

## REVIEW QUESTIONS.

1. Name the writers born in the second decade of our century.
2. Who wrote "Gates Ajar"?
3. Give selections of her beautiful thoughts.
4. Give some of Will Carleton's gems.
5. Do you enjoy Joaquin Miller?
6. Who are the humorists of America?
7. Which do you prefer?
8. Where is the birth place of Artemus Ward?
9. How many of the writers discussed were born in Massachusetts?
10. Where does Celia Thaxter live?
11. Where was Paul Hayne's home?
12. What is W. D. Howells' present business?
13. Will you give a treasure thought of Celia Thaxter?
14. Name prominent poets and fiction writers born during the 3d decade.
15. Also prominent historians, if any.
16. Are journalists also to be found?
17. Theologians of prominence?
18. Can you name Joaquin Miller's poem, which he predicted should "shake the rafters of heaven"?
19. What is your estimate of it?
20. Name T. B. Aldrich's best poem.
21. Give a thought from it.
22. Will you name other authors not in our list of study.
23. Does literary talent descend from parent to child?
24. If so, give examples.
25. If not, give proof.
26. What do you think of the poets of the last half century as compared with the previous half?
27. Are you prepared to decide now on their merits, or will you wait for further study on your part and the ripening and mellowing on theirs?
28. Give a golden thought from Hawthorne.
29. An immortal thought of Lowell's.

30. Quote from Holmes a gem of wit and also one of his soberer mood.
31. In what respect is Poe ranked as a genius?
32. What is the main tendency of all his writings?
33. Is it well to read much of those works which give no heed to the better part of our nature?
34. Is it not better to read those which lead upward to the mental and spiritual realm?
35. Which of our American authors dwell most upon these subjects, though sometimes not always visible at first sight?
36. Give your own ranking of our male writers in both fields.
37. Also the female writers.
38. Name writers of 4th decade.



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